

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /069 W

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R 041930Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9564

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, BL

SUBJ: BOLIVIAN UNIONS TO REMAIN IN "RECESS" THIS YEAR

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS OF FEBRUARY 3 AND 4, MINISTER OF LABOR MARIO VARGAS SALINAS DISCARDED THE POSSIBILITY THAT FREEDOM OF ACTION FOR UNIONS AND UNION LEADERS COULD BE GRANTED DURING THIS YEAR. THE STATEMENT WAS MADE TO THE COCHABAMBA PRESS WHERE THE MINISTER HAD GONE TO INAUGURATE SOME SOCIAL PROJECTS FOR FACTORYWORKERS.

2. THE PRESS REPORT ALSO COMMENTED THAT MINISTER VARGAS SALINAS IN THE PAS HAD OFTEN STATED THAT NORMAL UNION ACTIVITIES WOULD BE RESTORED IN 1976 UNDER THE NEW LABOR CODE. THE LABOR CODE, THE MINISTER REPORTEDLY NOTED WAS BEING REVISED AND WOULD BE REVIEWED BY THE CABINET ONCE COMPLETED.

COMMENT: THE MINISTER OF LABOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT CONFIRMED THE SUSPICIONS OF SEVERAL LABOR LEADERS THAT THE NEW LABOR CODE WOULD NOT BE PROMULGATED FOR SEVERAL MONTHS. ON THE NATIONAL LEVEL, LABOR LEADERS ARE SPLIT REGARDING THE DESIRABILITY OF OPERATING UNDER A NEW SYSTEM. SOME LEADERS

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CONFIDENT OF RANK AND FILE SUPPORT IN ELECTIONS

WILL BE DISAPPOINTED AT THE CONTINUATION OF THE
"RECESS" OF UNIONS, OF THE GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL
OF UNION FUNDS AND THE COORDINATOR STATUS (IN
EFFECT A CIVILIAN DRAFT) TO WHICH THEY ARE SUBJECT.
OTHER LEADERS CLAIM THAT THE PRESENT INCONVENIENT
SYSTEM IS PREFERABLE TO ACCEPTING A NEW AND MORE
STRINGENT LABOR CODE WHICH WOULD DECREASE PAST
RIGHTS AND "NORMALIZE" MORE GOVERNMENT CONTROL.
STILL OTHERS MAY FEAR THAT FREEDOM OF UNION
ACTIVITIES WITH SUBSEQUENT ELECTIONS WOULD COST
THEM THEIR JOBS.
STEDMAN

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